

SPEECH BY YAB DATO' SERI DR. MOHD KHIR BIN TOYO

**PRESIDENT OF THE MALAYSIAN YOUTH COUNCIL
OCCASION**

FAREWELL DINNER

4TH MALACCA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE

**DATE & TIME
THURSDAY, JUNE 30TH, 2004, 8PM**

MY FELLOW YOUTH

FIRST AND FOREMOST I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ORGANIZER FOR INVITING ME TONIGHT TO OFFICIALLY CLOSE THE 4TH MALACCA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE. I AM GLAD TO BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS AN IMPORTANT GROUP THAT NOT ONLY REPRESENTS THE FUTURE BUT ALSO THE BEST HOPE OF NATIONS AND INDEED OF MANKIND.

THE THEME THAT YOU HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING HERE IS A CRUCIAL AND IMPORTANT ONE AS THE ISSUE OF *YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES* STRIKES AT THE VERY HEART OF OUR STRUGGLE TO EMPOWER YOUTH. THIS EMPOWERMENT CAN ONLY HAPPEN WHEN THEY ARE INCLUDED AND THEIR VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS TAKEN NOTE OF IN DETERMINING THEIR OWN FUTURE. THEY MUST BE

INVOLVED MEANINGFULLY IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING THEIR COMMUNITIES, NATIONS AND THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN.

I AM SURE DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS, YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE VARIOUS ANGLES RELATING TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND HAD COME UP WITH RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO REALIZE THIS GOAL.

MY FELLOW YOUTH

LET ME SHARE WITH YOU THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE, WE ARE FORTUNATE AS WE HAVE A SYSTEM THAT ENCOURAGES THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH AT ALL LEVELS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. THERE ARE NO SHORTAGE OF POLICYMAKERS AT ALL STAGES OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE LOWEST LEVEL TO THE HIGHEST ECHELON OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP THAT ARE NOT AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER INVOLVED IN THE YOUTH MOVEMENT. THE BEST EXAMPLE IS OUR PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI WHO WAS ACTIVE IN THE YOUTH MOVEMENT AT BOTH THE GRASSROOTS AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

IT IS NO WONDER THAT DATUK SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI IS CLOSE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA. AS HIS HEART AND PULSE ARE IN

TUNE WITH THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF THIS NATION, THIS HAS RESULTED IN GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN MALAYSIA.

WE MAY VIEW THE TOPIC IN A LOPSIDED FASHION, BY ASSUMING THAT YOUTH WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BUT ARE NOT BEING GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY. HOWEVER, THE TRUTH IN MANY CASES IS THAT YOUTH ARE NOT INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE IF IT IS NOT RELEVANT TO THEM.

IN TODAY'S FAST PACED AND CONSTANTLY CHANGING WORLD, MANY YOUTHS ARE TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR PERSONAL PURSUITS AND IN TIME THEY BECOME DISINTERESTED IN PUBLIC AFFAIR, WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR LOCAL COUNCILS, LOCAL CHARITIES AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS? WE WOULD INVARIABLY FIND THAT MOST YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD NOT HAVE TIME FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES. OF COURSE, IF THEY ARE PAID OR REWARDED, THEY MAY BE INTERESTED, BUT OTHERWISE THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO SPEND THEIR TIME ON SUCH ENDEVOUR.

FELLOW YOUTHS

SO BEFORE WE ONLY CASTIGATE OUR SENIORS FOR NOT PROVIDING YOUTH WITH THE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, WE NEED TO LOOK AT OURSELVES AND COMMIT TO PARTICIPATION.

IT IS IMPORTANT WHEN ENGAGING OUR SENIORS; WE DO SO IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER, AND NOT IN A COMBATIVE MODE. YOUTH MAY MISDIRECT THEIR ENERGIES TO FUTILE ACTIVISM IN ORDER TO BE HEARD AS THERE IS A MISCONCEPTION THAT MAKING NOISES WILL RESULT IN BEING HEARD.

IT IS CRUCIAL FOR AN INTERGENERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING TO BE FOSTERED, WHERE YOUTHS SEE THEIR SENIORS AS PARTNERS, AND VICE VERSA. THE FIRST IMPERATIVE FOR ANY PARTICIPATION IN A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS TO UNDERSTAND. SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND BEFORE YOU ARE UNDERSTOOD!

BOTH YOUTH AND SENIORS NEED TO ADOPT A CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN EACH OTHER, SO THAT THEY CAN BECOME MUTUAL PARTNERS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES. VERY OFTEN YOUTH ARE PERCEIVED AS “SPOIL SPORTS,” COMPLICATED, BUREAUCRATIC AND AUTOCRATIC. SENIORS LIKEWISE PERCEIVE YOUTHS AS JUVENILE DELINQUENTS, OVER-ENTHUSIASTIC, AMBITIOUS, AND AS A

THREAT TO THEM.THESE CONCEPTIONS NEED TO BE LAID TO REST, AND A NEW CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT BE BORN..

FELLOW YOUTH

IN CONSONANCE WITH YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES WE WANT TO SEE MORE YOUNG MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT. WE WANT TO SEE MORE YOUNG SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. WE WANT TO SEE MORE YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS. IN SHORT WE WANT TO SEE MORE YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS THUS PROVING THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE!

IT IS MY HOPE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO HOLD POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE THAT WAY THEY CAN PROVE TO SOCIETY THAT GIVEN HALF A CHANCE THEY CAN MAKE IT, THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY!

WE HAVE A STERLING EXAMPLE IN THE PERSONA OF THE RIGHT HONORABLE DATUK SERI MOHD ALI BIN MOHD RUSTAM, PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH, WHO HAS LED PROVIDED YOUTH LEADERSHIP AT THE GRASSROOTS, NATIONAL AND NOW AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. HE CONTINUES TO INSPIRE YOUNG PEOPLE IN

MALAYSIA AND THE WORLD, AND IS A STAUNCH ADVOCATE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES. IT IS UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP THAT EVENTS SUCH AS THE MALACCA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DIALOGUE ARE HELD.

I HOPE THAT YOUR EXPERIENCES HERE HAVE BEEN VALUABLE AND STIMULATING, INCREASING YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE. THE MOST IMPORTANT BEING THAT WHEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR COUNTRIES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT WHAT YOU HAVE DECIDED HERE.

FINALLY LET ME EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH, THE MAIN ORGANIZER OF THIS MEETING. ALSO TO THE MALACCA STATE GOVERNMENT, THE ASIAN YOUTH COUNCIL, THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS AND ALL OTHER PARTNERS AND SPONSORS. IT IS WITH YOUR SUPPORT AND COMBINED EFFORT THAT HAS MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE.

I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE ALL HAD A PLEASANT TIME IN MALACCA, ON BEHALF OF THE MALAYSIAN YOUTH COUNCIL, I WISH YOU A PLEASANT JOURNEY HOME AND LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN OUR PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES.

I THANK YOU.

ENDS.